

## CHANGING EATING BEHAVIOUR IN TECHNO-FRIENDLY ERA

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### ABSTRACT

*Screen addiction is common in children these days, and most of the parents today complaint that their kids spend a lot of time in front of television. Earlier eating was an ethical and joyful act but now it's a duty that everyone wants to be done with it either while watching or travelling. If mealtime involves screen time too then one must understand the potential problems, it may cause. In case of children who are fussy eater, chances are that we let them watch their favourite cartoons or TV just to get them eat what served on their plate. But resorting to screen time to get the child to eat food may harm them more than good. In this techno world the family quality time and children's health are dire. The family meal is a time to share news, give guidance and to make plans together. In terms of children's health, family meals were an opportunity to provide all the family members with a healthier diet, based on wholesome homemade foods, which seems to lose its importance in this gadget-vulgarized world. Moreover, it is also of vital importance that what children are consuming via digital devices. They are born in the environment that surrounds screen time including parenting and socioeconomic status. If somehow, we agree that there are some potential benefits of screen as it can be used as teaching tools- but on contrast it has potential physical and mental health drawbacks. The ubiquity of these digital devices makes children to easily spend too much time being sedentary. So, it's a demand of time that we should minutely watch our screen interface timing both qualitatively and quantitatively.*

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**Keywords:** Screen Addiction, Family Meal, Drawbacks.

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### Introduction

Shakespeare much used English idiom, Eat, drink and be merry is very popular particularly among young people. This suggests the carefree attitude of young intent on an enjoyable life, where people encourage each other to eat up, drink up and give no thought to the future, because life is short. This idiom shows the utmost importance given to the food that people were used to enjoy their food, but in current scenario there is a vast change in eating habit and pattern of people. The traditional family mealtime is becoming a thing of the past. We are currently during a midst of major transitional phase in context to what people eat and, in the way, they eat in this very techno friendly era. Earlier it was traditional for all family members to eat together at the same time at the dining table and having a hearty meal with the family was an everyday ritual. Sitting together people used to consume traditional dishes on special occasion but in contrast modern eating has paved it own pattern of eating. Modern eating has been discussed to be characterized by a shorter eating duration, eating irregularity, and by skipping meals. Moreover (**Zizzaet al, 2001**). considered snacking between meals as apart of modern eating. In modern time, people more often eat by themselves (**Fischler, 2011**). In earlier days, there was a time when whole family use to sit together and eat together. Meals were traditionally central opportunities for conversation and discuss everyone's problem. At least, this time they use to meet and discuss their

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everyday happenings to each other. Youngers were taught basic etiquettes of eating and they use to share their happiness or grief with each other. How busy anyone was, they use to spare some time to sit and eat together. But in modern era with the change of time, and because of rapid and fast paced lifestyle, now having the meal together is no more in practice., it's a duty that we complete while reading books or watching TV or mobile. Moreover, evolvement of more and more technologies, the habit of sitting together and having food together is somewhat mizzled. Initially when TV, Mobile and other screen facing gadgets came, people restricted themselves to use those appliances in limitation. But slowly and slowly people get addicted to its use and now a days the condition is that they eat, sit, sleep in front of TV or watching mobile. Moreover, sometimes it is commonly seen in many families that parent themselves make their children involve in watching TV or mobile while feeding them. It is seen that not only toddler is getting habituated of screen interface during meal, but also the teens and adult. Many parents resort to mealtime distraction for their children to distract the little ones so that they eat a certain amount of food. Children who are fussy eaters may eat if they are allowed to watch their favourite shows on television. The distraction makes it easier for the parents to get them to eat. Unfortunately, this can form a habit and the child may not eat without watching Tv while weaning off this habit children may fuss and throw tantrums at first, but they will eventually learn to eat without watching tvA study by (**Shang Let a, I 2015**) concluded that longer screen time above the recommendation ( $\geq 2$  h/d) was associated with higher intake of energy (74 kcal, SE = 35), lower intake of fiber ( $- 0.6$  g/1000 kcal, SE = 0.2) and vegetables & fruit ( $- 0.3$  serving/1000 kcal, SE = 0.1) among all participants and with higher estimates in the overweight subgroup. Many studies say distracting children to get them to eat is unhealthy. The habit of eating food while watching TV prevents children from listening to their own bodies and understanding the demand of the body, when they are hungry or full. Again, one more study by (**Sigman A, 2012**) reported that screen time is associated in a dose- response manner with subsequent attention problems in a variety of age groups. It analysed that children who watched television at ages 1 and 3 years had a significantly increased risk of developing attentional problems by the time they were 7 years old. In another study of 8-24 years -olds, (**Swing et al, 2010**) concluded that viewing TV and playing video games each are associated with increased subsequent attention problems in childhood.

#### **Side-effects of Screen Interface (TV / Mobile/ Computer) while having Meal**

- **Leads to Obesity:** Toddlers tends to eat more while watching tv or mobile as they get distracted from the food type and quantity that they are consuming, rather they pay more attention to the screen.
- **Unhealthy Eating Habit:** Eating together as a whole family is a very good habit which were very common few years ago and was a healthy way to strengthen the relationships as everyone used to share their everyday happiness or problems which they are facing. But in todays device-driven world children tends to adopt some unhealthy habit such as watching Tv while eating is one of them. Because of use of screen children are just gobbling their foods instead of enjoying it. So, the joy of taking food is also losing its significance in this modern techno friendly world.
- **Destruction:** Many medical researchers have proved that the human brain notes the internal processing of different foods and sends the message back in terms of taste and palate satisfaction. But if you are distracted while eating your concentration shifts and the brain gets distracted and sends out wrong signals which may lead to overeating or starvation.
- **One Might Binge on Junk Food:** Due to visual display or very impressive advertisement of packed food most of the children get captivate towards that packed or commercially prepared food products instead of knowing their nutritional contents. It results in choosing quantity over quality which is mostly packaged food are loaded with. Moreover, most of the TV commercials are loaded with fast food and junk foods, which in turn make them, opt for those unhealthy food options.
- **Lower Metabolic Rate:** Watching TV during mealtime does not help in burning calories rather it reduces the metabolic rate. So, foods get digested very slowly.
- **Indigestion:** It may occur as watching TV is one's priority while having the meal and chewing that properly is secondary process. So, they don't even care how they are eating whether they are properly chewing or not or only galloping.
- **No Family Interaction:** If everyone is more interested in watching TV while eating the conversation that family usually enjoy during meals will not take place and there will be less time for family bonding.

### Some Tips to keep Kids Away from Screen Interface Especially while Eating

- Try to talk about something which is of their interest while the mealtime.
- Try to cook dishes in which they are interested. Sometimes try to surprise them in some creative way of serving the daily menu such as parathas in different shapes like square, oval, semicircle.
- Give them your complete attention during mealtime so that they understand that meal time is for food only.
- Try to get some utensils of their interest.
- Don't allow them to eat heavy snacks close to mealtime.
- Parents should also try to avoid the use of mobile and Tv in front of their kids while having meal. Keep the gadgets away so that he will know that mealtime is about food and family bonding.
- Inculcate the habit of sitting together and have food with others family from the age of weaning only.
- Take it slow with little one. You can start by having a five-minute mealtime without Tv and then gradually decreasing the time of screen interface. Most often child will tap and throws tantrums and does not eat because of no screen but eventually they will learn to eat without screen.
- Ensure that you have meals together as a family and that nobody watches Tv or uses a phone while eating. By observing you, your child will learn that mealtimes are for family.

### Conclusion

Change in every field is ever going and inevitable process, but in context of screen timing whether in front of TV or mobile it should be balanced. Although eating seems simple but at its basic, human food intake is still rather complex. Food is not only an important part of a balanced diet, but it is also one of our main routes to pleasure. No doubt food is essential to survival, it is the pleasure involved that makes eating worthwhile. This pleasure gets lost when we eat watching TV. It may be a tough job to stop your child from watching television while eating but it is not impossible. Don't let this issue become a habit, and if your child already has the habit of watching Tv while eating, then wean him/her off gradually with the help of above tips. We all know these days our lives are so busy, and the mealtime are the only way in which we really get to spend time with our loved ones and bond with them. It is very well said that a family that eats together, laughs together, stays together. Earlier eating was an ethical and joyful act but now it's a duty that everyone wants to done with it. (**Stephanie Pappas, 2020**) Nevertheless, total abstinence from recreational screen is not justified it should be down gradually. As all chefs know, great food can have a transformational impact.

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